SECTION 3.0

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CHAPTER 3.0
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3.1 OVERVIEW

A new county road, "Sunset-Athens Connector Road," is proposed to connect Athens Avenue to Sunset Boulevard in Placer County ("County"), California (**Figure 3-1**). This arterial roadway would begin at the existing western terminus of Sunset Boulevard at Cincinnati Avenue and continue westward for about one half mile, to a new intersection of this Sunset Boulevard extension and the new connector road. From this intersection, the new connector road would continue northward about one and a half miles to Athens Avenue. At this new intersection, Athens Avenue would be widened and dedicated turn lanes added. **Figure 3-2** shows the proposed roadway alignment upon the topographical map of the area, and **Figure 3-3** shows the aerial photograph of the proposed project site and surrounding parcels. The road would have two 16-foot wide lanes, a 14-foot raised median with emergency median crossings at intervals of approximately 800 feet between Sunset Boulevard and Athens Avenue, and an overall right-of-way width of 88 feet. The extension of Sunset Boulevard would require the crossing of an unnamed tributary to Pleasant Grove Creek. A bridge would be constructed over the creek to prevent interruption of water flow within the tributary, and avoid significant fill of wetlands. The Tribe is in the process of acquiring right-of-way easements through six undeveloped parcels over which the connector road would pass. The road would also pass through eight additional parcels that contain existing road easements. UAIC, the applicant, would build the road and bridge to Placer County standards and then relinquish the entire road right-of-way and improvements to the County.

3.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

1. to provide a more direct route from Highway 65 to Athens Avenue that utilizes the existing Sunset Boulevard railroad overpass allowing emergency vehicles and landfill traffic to utilize the existing overpass, creating safer and more efficient traffic circulation from Highway 65 to the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill and other destinations west;

2. to fulfill planning objectives of the "2015 Capital Improvement Program" of the Sunset Industrial Area Plan (Placer County, 1997), which calls for "*…improvements to the SIA infrastructure with an emphasis on circulation improvements;"* specifically, the Plan identifies transporation improvements,

Insert Figure 3-1

Figure 3-2

Figure 3-3

including a two-lane extension of Foothills Boulevard from its existing northern terminus to Athens Avenue, and extension of Sunset Boulevard from Cincinnati Avenue to the Foothill Boulevard extension;

3. to fulfill planning objectives of the Placer County General Plan; specifically, arterial transit corridors, including a two-lane extension of Foothills Boulevard from its existing northern terminus to Athens Avenue, and extension of Sunset Boulevard from Cincinnati Avenue to the Rocklin city limits; and

4. to fulfill conditions specified in Section 6 and Attachment E of the MOU between Placer County and UAIC (**Appendix B**), which states that UAIC will construct a new two-lane road that runs parallel to and west of Industrial Avenue that would connect Athens Avenue and Sunset Boulevard.

3.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site is currently undeveloped, and its present land use is rangeland for cattle grazing. The land is flat, and is covered primarily with pasture grasses. There are no trees or structures on the site, with the exception of an abandoned well located near the center of the proposed road corridor and a row of power poles and Eucalyptus trees that are found at the northern end of the project site alongside Athens Avenue. The project site is bounded by Athens Avenue to the north, Fiddyment Road and a municipal landfill to the west, industrial facilities and rangeland to the south, and Cincinnati Avenue, Industrial Avenue, and Union Pacific rail lines to the east.

3.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Following is a summary of project components. Specific design details are provided in the engineering plan set entitled, "Thunder Valley Phase 2- Off-site Improvements, County of Placer" (Martin, Rivett and Olson, Inc., 2003).

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

A public road, currently referred to as the "Sunset-Athens Connector Road," is proposed to be constructed that would enable vehicular access to Athens Avenue from Sunset Boulevard. The proposed road alignment is shown in three separate sections in **Figures 3-4, 3-5,** and **3-6**. The proposed road is a new arterial road that would connect Athens Avenue directly to Sunset Boulevard to provide an alternate route from Highway 65 to Athens Avenue that utilizes the existing Sunset Boulevard rail line overpass. The project would allow emergency vehicles and traffic to utilize the existing Sunset Avenue railroad overpass.

Figure 3-4

Figure 3-5

Figure 3-6

Athens Avenue would be widened at its intersection with the connector road. This widening would provide dedicated right and left turn lanes from Athens onto the proposed connector road. The widened portion of Athens Avenue will be gradually tapered back to the existing width. Road widening along Athens will extend approximately 500 feet to the west and 1,000 feet to the east of its intersection with the new road.

The proposed road would begin at the terminus of Sunset Avenue at Cincinnati Avenue and extend approximately 2,300 linear feet west to a new intersection. Stop signs would be placed at this new intersection, and flashing warning beacons will be placed at the westbound and southbound approaches to this intersection. For additional safety, street lights (200 watt high-pressure sodium) would be installed to light the intersection area. Electricity will be provided from the existing power grid at the Sunset-Cincinnati intersection to this site via conduit (2-inch PVC) that is buried in the toe slope on the north side of the road alignment. The proposed connector road would then turn right, extending 8,100 feet northward until it terminates with Athens Avenue between Sparta Court and Fiddyment Road. The northbound connector road's median would narrow to allow a dedicated left-turn lane at this intersection with Athens Avenue, regulated by a stop sign. At this intersection, Athens Avenue would be widened from its current width of 28 feet to approximately 65 feet to allow for the addition of dedicated left and right turn lanes.

The proposed road would have two 16-foot wide lanes. After striping, the lanes would be 12-feet wide with 4-foot shoulders. The two lanes would be separated by a 14-foot raised median with emergency median crossings at intervals of approximately 800 feet between Sunset Boulevard and Athens Avenue. The median would be backfilled with native earth, and formally landscaped and irrigated by future development projects. Initially, sleeves would be installed under the road to the median for future irrigation and electrical access. The road corridor right-of-way width is normally 88 feet, but varies up to 122 feet. The right-of-way boundary would be fenced to separate the road corridor from adjacent cattle grazing activities. Additionally, a temporary construction easement of 20 feet, but varying up to 40 feet at culverts, would be needed on each side of the proposed road. Taking into account the length of proposed segments and widths of construction easements and rights-of-way, the total project study area is approximately 22 acres. With the exception of the median, the roadbed would consist of lime-treated subgrade and aggregate (treated earth and gravel). The finished pavement would consist of asphalt concrete. Project grading will be performed in accordance with County Standard Specifications and include stripping and disposal of the surficial vegetation layer (depth of 3-4 inches) and reprocessing of underlying disturbed soils (depth of 8 or more inches). Project cut and fill slopes are designed to have a slope ratio of 1.5 horizontal to 1 vertical, with a maximum ratio of 2:1.

A storm drain system, designed for 100-year peak flows, would be installed to properly drain the road and allow uninterrupted flow of drainage in the vicinity. Road grading (e.g. 2 percent slope on each lane) would be designed to carry stormwater into the system by gravity flow. The storm drain system would

include reinforced concrete drainpipes (12 to 27-inch diameter), curbs, dikes, drop inlets, and maintenance holes. Where the proposed road intersects natural drainages, road cross culverts would be installed and would consist of pre-cast concrete box culverts (6 feet wide by 3 feet tall), wing walls, and rock-slope protection.

The proposed road will be constructed to a modified rural secondary (Plate 3 Land Development Manual) standard. The connector will be designed to meet 55 mph design speed criteria, as specified in the latest version of the Caltrans *Highway Design Manual,* unless otherwise approved by the Department of Public Works. The roadway structural section(s) will be designed for a Traffic Index of 10.0 (Ref. Section 4, Land Development Manual).

The UAIC will prepare and submit Improvement Plans, specifications and cost estimates for roadway and utility improvements (per the requirements of Section II of the Land Development Manual [LDM] that are in effect at the time of submittal) to the County for review, consistent with the project analyzed in the EIR**.** The UAIC will also submit for review and approval a striping and signing plan with the project Improvement Plans. The plan will include all on- and off-site traffic control devices and shall be reviewed by the County Traffic Engineer. A construction signing plan will also be provided with the improvement plans for review and approval by the County Traffic Engineer. An Encroachment Permit will be obtained from DPW prior to Improvement Plan approvals.

The UAIC will provide the following easements/dedications on the Improvement Plans to the satisfaction of the DPW and DRC: dedicate to Placer County a 40'- 88' (or greater) wide highway easement, as needed (Ref. Chapter 16, Placer County Code) along the proposed connector roadway for road and utility purposes. After completion of improvements, the road may be accepted into the County's maintained mileage system.

UTILITY REALIGNMENTS

To construct the proposed connector road, some existing utility lines would need to be extended, realigned, and/or capped. Existing utility lines include sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water supply, power, and communications. Existing communications lines and mailboxes on the north side of Athens Avenue will remain without modification. At the Sunset Boulevard terminus at Cincinnati Avenue, several utilities exist, ready for extension westward into this area of the SIA when needed. A 16-inch diameter water line, buried 4 feet below grade, will remain unaltered. An 8-inch diameter sanitary sewer line, buried 16 feet below grade, will be extended 200 feet west and terminate in a stub, clean-out, and maintenance hole. A Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) high-pressure gas line, 4-inch diameter, is buried 16 feet below grade and will be upgraded to a 6-inch diameter line and relocated northward approximately 35 feet and a new 10-foot maintenance easement dedicated to PG&E. This easement will be within the temporary construction easement area included in the project study area, and will convert to a permanent maintenance easement. The 6-inch gas line extends westward along the proposed extension

of Sunset Boulevard for 1,700 feet to a junction with a 12-inch diameter gas main. Where the pipeline crosses the intermittent stream, it will be buried 45 feet below using a horizontal directional drill that will not disturb the streambed. The 12-inch gas main crosses the road alignment just west of the proposed bridge and intermittent stream (station 290+50). This gas main, buried 4 feet below existing grade, will not need to be relocated. At the new intersection of the connector road and Athens Avenue, several utility lines exist. An existing sanitary sewer force main, 4-inch diameter, and a water line, 18-inch diameter, are both buried 4 feet below grade, but will remain unaltered. Existing power utility poles and lines along the south side of Athens Avenue will be relocated farther south; utility lines on the north side will remain altered. Existing storm drainpipes, 18-inch diameter, will be connected to the new storm drain system of the connector road.

BRIDGE

The proposed road would extend Sunset Avenue west across an unnamed tributary of Pleasant Grove Creek approximately 1,000 feet west of Cincinnati Avenue. A bridge (**Figure 3-7)** would be constructed over the creek to prevent interruption of water flow within the tributary and avoid significant fill of wetlands. Bridge design elements by Martin, Rivett & Olson, Inc. (2003) include the following: a seven-span, precast voided slab bridge; dimensions of 460 feet in length and 72 feet in width; precast and pre-stressed octagonal concrete piles, 2 feet in diameter; pile-supported diaphragm abutments and 6-column pile-bent extensions, each skewed 40 degrees to match channel alignment; deck grade of 118 feet, approximately 8 feet above low-channel grade and 4 feet above ground surface at the abutments; 2 lanes, 28-feet wide, separated by a raised concrete median, 14 feet wide; after striping, finished lanes will be 12 feet wide, each with a 16 foot shoulder; metal beam guard rails leading up to bridge, then metal tube railing on the bridge. Several conduits (4-inch diameter PVC) would be included in the bridge deck to allow for the extension of dry utility lines, such as telephone and fiber optic cables.

Figure 3-7

To create the ramps needed to elevate the road to bridge deck elevation and to protect the bridge from stream scour, 2 retaining walls would be built: a 332 foot long retaining wall at the northeast corner and a 146 foot long retaining wall at the southeast corner of the bridge. The retaining walls would have a class 2 aggregate base, and be constructed of reinforced cast concrete. Because the proposed roadway alignment would fill a 200-foot section of the intermittent stream, a stream channel bypass is proposed to redirect the flow of the existing stream alongside the road base and then under the bridge (**Figure 3-8**). To redirect the flow, a metal wall 181 feet in length would be installed, consisting of sheet piles driven 14 feet deep into the ground, and a new stream channel excavated. The aforementioned retaining wall would also help direct stream flow during higher flows. This channel bypass would be installed before bridge construction to divert the stream into its new course. In conjunction with this retaining wall, a submersible pump would be used to dewater the old channel for construction of the bridge foundations, abutments, and retaining walls. A revegetation plan would be implemented to both stabilize and revegetate the modified stream bank in conjunction with the placement of rip-rap (rock slope protection).

3.5 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Project construction would require up to 80 workers; however, the exact number of construction workers would be determined by the contractor and would depend to a large extent on the construction schedule. Construction activities planned for the proposed project include:

- Providing construction area signs and a traffic control system;
- Site preparation and vegetation clearing;
- Constructing a new roadway and road widening, including roadway excavation and embankment placement, and paving;
- Building a concrete bridge, including two concrete retaining walls;
- Installing electrical conduits and sleeves for future use;
- Construction or extension of drainage culverts and sanitary sewers;
- Placing or relocating signs; and
- Placing pavement striping and marking.

The project would require minimal grading and excavation because the site is relatively flat. Project cuts and fills are expected to be relatively minor, with maximum heights of approximately 5 feet. The excavated soil would be used on-site as fill material. Additional clean fill material will be brought in from the vicinity if needed.

3.6 PROJECT OPERATION

UAIC would contract to build the road, and then relinquish the finished road to Placer County for ownership and maintenance.

Figure 3-8

3.7 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS

The information contained in this EIR may be used as the basis for the following project-related approvals:

- Approval of an encroachment permit and improvement plans by Placer County;
- Issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) for storm water drainage; and
- Approval of gas pipeline plans by PG&E.

Regulatory and agency approvals related to the project that have already occurred include the following:

- State Historic Preservation Office consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act;
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- Issuance of a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the filling of jurisdictional wetlands;
- Issuance of Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Section 401 Water Quality Certification or waiver;
- Section 7 Consultation under the federal Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service; and
- Issuance and execution of a Stream Bed Alteration Agreement by the California Department of Fish and Game for modifications to unnamed tributaries to Pleasant Grove Creek and Orchard Creek.